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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, April 29, 1932

FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY

Subject: "May Day Festivities". Information approved by the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Bulletin available: "Eggs at any Meal" Leaflet 39, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Do you mind my reproducing for you some of this morning's conversation at our house? It all began when I asked Uncle Ebenezer to answer the phone.

"Yes, I'll go," said Uncle Ebenezer, "but it won't be for me, you know that. It will be someone wanting you to bake a cake for a church supper, or give her your best recipe for something or other, Aunt Sammy."

"Ebenezer, will you stop grumbling and go to that telephone this minute?"

"Come quick, Aunt Sammy, it's small Priscilla down the street. She wants to know how to celebrate May Day, -- what are May baskets, and all sorts of questions I can only half answer."

"Well, now the thing for you to do, Ebenezer, is to go right back to the 'phone and invite little Priscilla to come up to the house so we can tell her all we know about May Day. Then in the meantime get Silas in here and the three of us will put our heads together so we'll have plenty of ideas by the time Priscilla comes."

"He won't have to get me. I'm right here, and I wouldn't be surprised if I didn't have enough ideas by myself to fill Priscilla's pretty little head. Don't you remember, Aunt Sammy, how I used to be jealous because a little boy couldn't be selected for Queen of the May? You surely haven't forgotten the year you laughed at me for suggesting that a little boy in the neighborhood who still had long curls would make a good queen? And then when you finally convinced me that only girls could be queens, I held out that the celebration was unbalanced in favor of girls and there ought to be a King of May too. Shall we tell Priscilla that tale?"

"Mercy, yes, Silas. No doubt she'd think that great fun. You know children are always interested in hearing that the grown-ups who seem so allwise were young once and made funny mistakes. But let's not stop with that. I must tell her how I feel about May Day. To me it is the very loveliest of the folk lore festive days. It is so full of the beauty of spring, and it offers so many chances to express deep regard for dear friends. I'm thinking just now, of course, of the custom of giving May Day baskets. My! how we used to enjoy making them out of colored paper, so tediously braided together, and how many hours we'd spend in the woods gathering spring blossoms, each of us trying to make the daintiest and most unusual collection. And then how we'd scramble to be the first to ring the door bell and leave a basket for the person we'd selected. And we never told each other who was to have our May basket.

"Remember the year you, Silas, and you, Ebenezer, and I, each decided on dear little Bold Aunt Hettie Simon, and how we sneaked out of our beds early to be first, and nearly knocked each other over getting through her front gate almost at daybreak? You know, come to think of it, we were an unusually happy adjustable trio. Just think how we managed that little episode! Of course we were disappointed to have selected the same person for our May day basket, and each was sorry not to be first, but remember how we decided we'd all ring the bell together, and leave our three baskets all at once, so you let me pull the handle of the bell first and each of you gave it a tug in rapid succession, and then how we ran! Quite different from the dressed-up, sedate way some of the modern children present May day baskets. The fairy-like little miss who presented Mrs. Coolidge with her first may day basket the first year she was the first lady of the land- Didn't that child get a beautiful smile, one of those genuinely appreciative ones which endeared Grace Coolidge to so many of us, young and old alike? I cut that picture out of the paper. Maybe I can find it for Priscilla. I have one of Mrs. Hoover too. Nice, isn't it, that we've had in succession two "first ladies" who understand and love little children. Well, I'll be getting sentimental or philosophical here in a minute if I'm not careful. There's just something about the spirit of May Day that does that to folks like me."

, "I can't blame you Aunt Sammy. Even Silas and I respond to beauty of May Day festivities, don't we Silas? Why, even now I can't watch the graceful girls tripping in and out, weaving the pattern on the may pole with their delicately colored ribbons, without recalling all of the pretty girls I've ever known, and wondering if any of them ever looked sweeter or stepped more lightly. And last year when those girls down at the high school wore such dainty-colored dresses, all of the shades of the rainbow, with sandals dyed to match, and wound that pole so perfectly, dancing around on the green lawn, with that tingling music by the school orchestra, it just reminded me of one of my favorite fairy stories."

"Well, here comes Priscilla. By the way you boys have joined in, I think you can tell her about May Day as well as I. Just don't forget when you're talking about May baskets to tell her that except when giving a basket to the President's wife, it is customary to ring the bell and run, not waiting to hand it in. Tell her about the tiny little baskets, big enough for only a few violets or spring beauties. And tell her too, that sometimes May baskets are filled with a variety of fruit, each piece washed and polished until it is shiny and colorful. And while you fill little Priscilla's ears with May Day tales, I must plan a menu for a May Day luncheon for Betty Mac. You know she's our new neighbor in the next block who asked me to

think of something very nice, a little different, and not too expensive for her first party in her new home. Quite a large order, but I'll do my best.

"Let's see, I guess first of all I'll suggest she fix a May basket for the centerpiece. Maybe she can take their car and go out in the woods for spring flowers, but if she can't, she can use the early garden kinds - tulips, jonquils, and maybe some branches from her spirea bush. If she lived farther south or if she felt she wanted to add a few things from the florist's, her variety would be much greater. But after all, the tradition of this day is to use wild flowers or garden varieties. Well, she can work that out as she wishes, just so she keeps the colors delicate, and doesn't get her boquet too tall. That low, spready basket she uses on the porch window-sill in the summer will be just right. I think I'll suggest she use it.

"Dear me, I was starting to plan the menu, and hereI've spent all this time on the centerpiece. It is important, though, for <u>this</u> occasion if it ever was for any.

"Here goes for the menu without another bit of sidetracking. I'll rush right through planning it, and then think out the details on the return-trip. There'll be something made of fruit first, a sort of spring beauty fruit cup. Then Eggs, Benedict, Buttered new peas, Parsley potatoes, Radish roses, Olives, Lady Baltimore Cake, and Coffee.

"I'll repeat the menu as I picture each course to satisfy myself it's pretty enough for Betty Mae's May Day Luncheon:

Spring Beauty Fruit cup
Eggs Benedict, Buttered New Peas, Parsley Potatoes, Radish Roses, Olives, Lady Baltimore Cake and Coffee.

Now about that fruit cup. It must be delicately flavored, - rich in the aroma of spring. Diced fresh pineapple and a few ripe strawberries, with our year-around standbys, grape fruit sections and orange slices. I think that selection will do very nicely. If Betty Mae wishes to keep the cost down, she can leave out one fruit or substitute a canned fruit for one.

"Eggs Benedict, -- I know that name will intrigue her and her guests too. You know Ebenezer, that's the dish you like so well. A firmly poached egg, placed on a thin slice of ham that has been carefully broiled to a delicate red-brown,- this two-story delicacy placed on a round of toast, and the whole topped off with some delicious Hollandaise Sauce. I'll just refer Betty Mae to the recipe in the egg leaflet, and she will promptly correct me by saying 'Oh! you mean Leaflet 39, Eggs at any Meal." She's a precious thing, isn't she, boys, just learning the names of the bulletins so meticulously.

"I shan't have to tell her about simmering the peas gently with the cover off; she'll remember that from the other time. And she will know too how to make her parsley potatoes just perfectly. She'll remember to chill the olives too. But I must tell her to leave a piece of green stem on each radish, cut the red skin part-way down in the shape of petals, and then drop the radishes in ice water so the pieces will curl up like the petals of a flower.

"The Lady Baltimore cake is in the radio cookbook and in most other recipe books, too, I guess. It is such a delicate and moist cake with its fruit filling that no other dessert is needed. I imagine Betty Mae will serve it on those pretty little, daintily-tinted glass plates of hers, and offer a fork with it, since a successful Lady Baltimore cake is too moist to handle with the fingers.

There, there, I've thought aloud so long that there isn't time left for recipe. Well, no matter. You may have the leaflet "Eggs at any Meal,"- for the asking, and it has manyother interesting suggestions in addition to Eggs Benedict."

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